

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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FM AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4320

INFO AMEMBASSY QUITO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD SOPN EC

SUBJECT: SPECIAL PRIVILEGES OF GOE ARMED FORCES UNDER
ATTACK

1. IN MAJOR STATEMENT ADDRESSED TO "NATIONAL PUBLIC
OPINION" IN BOTH PRINCIPAL GUAYAQUIL DAILIES (EL UNIVERSO
AND EL TELEGRAFO) OF DEC 23, THE PRESTIGIOUS GUAYAQUIL
CHAMBER OF INDUSTRIES ATTACKED THE GOVERNMENT FOR "LACK
OF SERIOUSNESS WITH THE ECUADOREAN PEOPLE."

2. CITING A STORY WHICH APPEARED IN DEC 21 EL UNIVERSO
(FRONT PAGE) THAT 4,855 "PACKAGES" HAD RECENTLY ARRIVED IN
THE PORTS OF GUAYAQUIL AND MANTA DESTINED FOR ARMED FORCES
END USERS AND CONTAINED VARIOUS CATEGORIES OF "MERCANDISE,"
TOYS, AND LIQUOR, THE CHAMBER COMMENTED THAT THIS REPORT
HAD LEFT THEM "PERPLEXED AND STUPEFIED" AS TO HOW THE
GOVERNMENT WAS GOING TO EXPLAIN THIS TO THE COUNTRY WHEN ONLY
FOUR MONTHS AGO ECONOMIC SACRIFICES HAD BEEN DECREED
AMONG THEM THE RESTRICTIONS OF IMPORTS -- FOR THE PURPOSE
OF HALTING THE DETERIORATION OF ECUADOR'S FOREIGN MONETARY
RESERVES. INDICATING THAT THE PUBLIC SECTOR MUST SHARE IN
THE ECONOMIC SACRIFICE WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR, THE CHAMBER
SAID THE "FIRST QUALITY OF A GOVERNING BODY SHOULD BE
HONESTY AND SINCERITY" AND IT CALLED ON THE GOE TO DEMONSTRATE
THAT THE PACKAGES IN QUESTION WERE NOT OF A "LUXURIOUS

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CHARACTER."

3 COMMENT: THE GOE HAS SO FAR BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL IN CONVINCING THE PUBLIC THAT THE SHIPMENTS WERE ANYTHING BUT CONSUMABLES FOR THE MILITARY. ALTHOUGH A SIMILAR "CHRISTMAS SHIPMENT" RECEIVED SOME UNFAVORABLE ATTENTION A YEAR AGO, THIS YEAR IT IS PARTICULARLY EMBARRASSING TO THE ARMED FORCES. A YEAR AGO THERE WAS NO SIGNIFICANT IMPORT AUSTERITY -- THIS YEAR THERE IS. ALSO, IT CONFIRMS THE DARKEST THOUGHTS IN LOCAL BUSINESS SECTORS THAT THE PUBLIC SECTOR NEVER REALLY INTENDED TO APPLY THE NEW RESTRICTIONS TO ITSELF. FINALLY, AT A TIME WHEN THE GOE IS BEING SUBJECT TO CRITICISM OVER AGRARIAN REFORM, RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT, AND LABOR PROBLEMS HAVE BECOME A THORN IN ITS SIDE, A FLAGRANT ABUSE OF PRIVILEGE SUCH AS THIS CAN ONLY ADD TO DISENCHANTMENT HERE. THE IMPORTATIONS HAVE REALLY NO IMPORTANT ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCE PER SE, BUT THE CHAMBER OBVIOUSLY SAW THIS AS A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY TO VENT ITS FRUSTRATIONS WITH THE GOE ON THE GENERAL HANDLING OF THE ECONOMY.

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